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The clans are of basic importance. They are the largest units of solidarity, and open conflict never occurs within them, as it would not between a man's clan and his wife's and mother's clan. It is through his clan that a man establishes his totemic relations and identifies himself with the sacred world by virtue of a mystical experience of his father. The mother is supposed to be spiritually fertilized by the entrance into her uterus of the infant's soul when it has come from the child's father's totemic well. Many ethnologists have insisted that the Australian aborigines have no knowledge of physiological conception. Although I held this opinion during the first part of my field work, I later came to the conclusion that knowledge of procreation is general to the Murngin but is considered of little importance.[4]

The blood feud is forever present and tends to kill a sufficient number of young men to allow the system of polygyny[5] to function. The Murngin have developed a number of well-constructed types of warfare which form dramatic episodes in the several chains of feuds linking the dead generations of the past to those of the living.

The moiety[5] is a still larger unit than the clan, dividing the sixty-odd clans into two groups which intermarry. By the device of the moiety, the whole of the life of the Murngin, as well as nature, is placed in two opposing groups called Yiritja and Dua.

A final important structure in Murngin society is the age-grading[5] institution. It divides, first, the men from the women (see page 131, Age Grading) on the basis of those who are initiated into the mysteries and those who are not, and then redivides the men on an age-graded scale based primarily on the place a man achieves within the rest of his social organization through *rites de passage*.

Within this social configuration the life of each Murngin male goes through an exact cycle. The first life crisis occurs when the Murngin soul, through the father's mystic experience, leaves the totemic well and enters the womb of the mother. By circumcision around the age of six to eight years the individual passes from the social status of a woman to that of a man. When at about the age of eighteen he achieves parenthood and is shown his totems for the first time, he goes to another, higher status; and to a still higher when, at about thirty-five, he sees the high totems. At death he passes through a very elaborate mortuary rite, returns to his totemic well, and the circle is complete. The personality before birth is purely spiritual; it becomes almost completely profane or unspiritual in the earlier period of its

[4] See pages 23-25.
[5] See Glossary of Technical Terms.

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593 775 15v the people engaged in the trouble because it is believed a spirit of the dead should not be disturbed by fights until after the last mourning ceremony. It was as father and mother that the two protested, but evidently through the child there was a greater bond of solidarity between them.

605 304 When a young dué is circumcised, his near galle cut their thighs "to show their sorrow." A galle always carries her dué's bones after they have been exhumed.

605 *Dué Diramo* ⟷ *Galle Diramo* (father's sister's son ⟷ mother's brother's son)

There are as many variations in the dué-diramo and galle-diramo relationship as in the dué-diramo and galle-mielk type.

[607] This is one of the strongest relationships between men. The actual brothers of ego's wife (who is the daughter of mother's brother) and the consanguine father's sister's son (who is the husband of ego's sister) have the strongest bond of any of the male dué and galle. Each [431] always comes to the other for assistance when he gets into trouble. When a man is giving presents to gawel for gawel's daughter, he also offers them to galle diramo because he is brother to the wife.

When Narnarngo got himself into trouble with Bengaliwe his dué immediately came to his assistance (see page 86). This is only one instance of scores recorded by the writer.

Dué and galle engage in many enterprises together, such as canoe building. The bond between them finds a full expression in all the everyday activities of life. When a man is in trouble and needs a good supply of weapons it is always his brothers, and his dué and galle, who lend him extra spears and clubs, and who come to his assistance.

605 582 Male dué and galle have added strength given to their relationship through indirect ties; dué's son and galle's daughter will later be husband and wife; and galle will later be, or is, gawel to dué's son, just as dué is waku to galle's father. This last relationship is one of the most binding in Murngin society, and by indirect relationship it occurs twice in the reciprocity that exists between galle and dué: dué's son is waku to galle, and dué is waku to galle's father.

605 The full position of dué diramo and galle diramo cannot be realized until one studies the behavior of yeppa and her brother and her position as the wife of dué. The dué's position therefore includes the following relationships: (1) to his wife; (2) to galle's father; and (3) his son's relationship of waku to dué's galle. Every one of these elements

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but does not dance in the triangular ground (see the openings in the "ladder" generally classed as spatial expression); at the same time he moves to the boys' and unmarried men's camp. When a man is married he starts living openly in the main camp with his wife and becomes a wonga mirri. At approximately this time he sees Yurlunggur. At a later period, sometimes after only a year or two and other times much later, he gives his blood to Yurlunggur. In the Narra ceremonies a man tends to be much older before he sees the higher totems, which, ordinarily speaking, means he has had children or he is biologically in middle age. Although the initiation symbols vary for the older and less well-defined statuses, the fundamental division between men and women which usually identifies a man with the male group is in all initiations symbolized by the rite of circumcision, whether it be an element in the Djungguan, Marndiella, or other ritual. The circumcised penis has the mark of the snake upon it because the python has taken the foreskin and by the operation the blood has been let for the Great Father—it is a social mark on an individual.[1]

[1] An autobiographical account of a Murngin native is in preparation which will be a statement of age grading as it is seen and felt by the individual experiencing it.

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small fire. It is used to haft wooden spear heads to their shafts, to articulate the peg of the spear-thrower to the shaft, and also to haft the feathers of some of the larger headdresses to a wooden or bone shaft.

Beeswax is used to join the stone spear head to the shaft, it serves as the core for the various feather headdresses, it is used to make the mouth of the wooden trumpet small enough to fit the lips, and at times it is used as calking material for boats. It is also pushed into the hole always made in the septum to give the nose, for purely aesthetic reasons, a very concave form. (If beeswax is not used, small rings are made by wrapping two ends of cane together with fiber string and inserting them in the hole made in the septum.) When not in use, beeswax is molded into a flat mass and carried in a man's basket.

Human blood or the sap of an orchid bulb (djelkork) is used to glue feathers and paint to the dancers' bodies for the various ceremonies, and to stick these same materials on their totemic emblems. When the bulb is used, it is chewed and the macerated end rubbed on the object to be decorated.

Hafting.—Wooden objects to be hafted together are always carved to fit nicely. Ironwood resin or beeswax is heated and applied to the parts, which are then fitted together and wrapped with fiber string.

III. Murngin Artifacts

In the last few pages we have briefly described the Murngin in relation to their natural environment, the kinds of materials they select from the environment, and the more general techniques used in fashioning their tools. In Appendix II, pages 471-505, we shall describe the various articles of the technology and their manufacture.

Murngin technology is forever subject to two fundamental changes: first, the constant movements from food ground to food ground, and, secondly and more radically, the exigencies of the alternate rainy and more favorable dry seasons. Both are essentially problems of environmental adaptation: the one involves the adjustment of man to his food supply rather than vice versa through an agricultural or pastoral economy; and the other is an adjustment to a semi-annual seasonal change which can best be stated in terms of fifty to sixty inches of rain during three or four months and none at all during the rest of the year. These adjustments have profoundly and fundamentally affected Murngin technology and, as we shall see later, their ritual and myth.

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773 852 body and it is usually thought of as having the women and children inside it. Frequently the green leaves surrounding it are said to be the women after he has spewed them up. During one of the many times I was told the story of the Wawilak women, when the narrator got to the moment in the drama when the sisters were seeking something more powerful to stop Yurlunggur and they sang menstrual blood, he interrupted himself and said, "When the dance place for the Djungguan is square and not triangular it is a camp of these women. When it is this way [triangular] it is a snake's body. At Mirrirmina you can see the holes where all the sons of Yurlunggur crawled around the two women and you can see the dance ground where the snake fell after swallowing them."

852 E. The Bloodletting

778 1. Yurlunggur is painted.

796 2. Yurlunggur is blown over the men who give their blood; the names of the ancestors are called.

304 1. All during this section of the ceremony the totemic trumpet is kept in the old men's camp or in the specially built ceremonial hut (the python's totem well). During the preliminary stages of this section Yurlunggur is painted.

852 796 304 561 2. On the day before the circumcision a bloodletting ceremony takes place in the old men's camp. The blood is to be used as an adhesive substance to hold the birds' down and native cotton to the dancers' bodies. Before a man offers his blood for the first time Yurlunggur is blown all over his body; after the first time it is unusual. This ceremony is one of the ritual methods by which a man is admitted into the higher order of the men's association. Though it is not obligatory for him to go through this rite as it is for the young boy to go through the circumcision ceremony, all of the men feel it their privilege to contribute their blood either the first time they enter the old men's grounds or at some later period. Most men, while still in their prime, give their blood every time this ceremony is held.

852 796 304 533 Here is an account of one of the many blood sacrifice rituals witnessed by the author:

The old men sing over the man, Lika. The "mouth" of Yurlunggur is placed against him and the trumpeter blows all over his body while the trumpet's notes keep time with the slow rhythm of the singing sticks of the leader.

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The cycle of songs is sung in the following sequence: 852

(1) Human blood (Man-in-gul-ur-un-gul) 796
(2) Python snake totem (Yurlunggur ar-lur-la) 304
(3) Snake's hiss (Djil-djil-la) 533

After each song the men take turns calling out the name of some of their ancestors (usually father's father or mother's mother's brother). Sometimes only the names of the ancestors are called out, but at other times men shout: "My mother's mother's brother [mari] carries a totemic emblem on his back!!"—"My mother's mother's mother's brother makes a totemic emblem!"—"My mari has a large penis!!"—"My father's father [marikmo] has a net in his hand and is catching many fish." The old men are always described by the men who use their names as making a totemic emblem or performing some other act while a totemic emblem is being made. The names of the old men are always their totemic and taboo names. The relatives referred to may be actually living, dead, or mythological ancestors. Each man continues all the relatives' names he pleases to select and then calls out, "Bilin [I'm through]." The leader then turns to the next man and he continues the same process.

(4) The fourth song sung is earthquake shaking the ground (movement of Yurlunggur)
(5) Snake's tongue
(6) Dua lightning
(7) Black rain cloud (Gor-ro-ma-la)
(8) Rain clouds covering the sky (Warn-ba-nar-ri)

The members of each subclass are taken in order by the leader to call out the names of their ancestors as well as the names of their totemic emblems. The Ballung subclass sings first, then Kamerdung and Wamut follow. All the Yiritja subclasses follow and then the fourth Dua one. Sometimes all four of the Dua subsections are called first, then the four Yiritja. Giving the ceremony a sequence of songs that follow in order of subsections grouped according to moiety definitely integrates the subsections into the ceremonial structure. At the same time the dead and the mythological ancestors are also placed in their correct subsections and moiety.

While the singing is going on, the man's arms are tied near the wrist and shoulder with some stout cord. A stone spear head is broken and a flake of it used to make a half-inch cut in the lower arm. The

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852 196 304 533

leader rubs the man's head with his hand while another cuts his arm. The totemic emblem is blown against the wound.

The blood runs slowly, and the rhythm of the song is conducted with equal slowness. In a second or two the blood spurts and runs in a rapid stream. The beat of the song sung by the old men increases to follow the rhythm of the blood. The blood runs into a paper-bark basin. "When Lika gets up he'll be very quick and feel very light; and he will be very happy because that blood running out of him will make him that way."

Two men hold the trumpet for a third to play. One of them keeps his hand on the blood-giver's head, occasionally rubbing it, and then massaging the forearm. He keeps one hand or part of his body against the trumpet.

The bottom of the basin fills with blood, and pieces of paper bark are taken from a supply near at hand, broken up in little pieces, and thrown into the basin. They soak up the blood and more pours in upon them. Once more small pieces of paper bark are placed in the basin to be saturated. These pieces of bark will be used later as brushes with which to put on the blood. The giver looks down at the blood coming from his arm with a smile which expresses pride, a slight embarrassment at being the center of attention, and real pleasure. Meanwhile the leader of the ceremony continues to massage his arm. The chorus now sings stringy bark tree.

The blood runs slower and the rhythm is decreased. One of the men loosens the cord on the upper arm and it is taken off. The song and the blowing of the trumpet continue. The slowly dripping blood is stopped with a bit of bush cotton or birds' down. The blood-giver massages his arm with an upward movement. He goes over to the side of the camp and lies down. Frequently the men who give their blood faint and remain in a state of coma for an hour or more because of exhaustion.

The next man opens a hole from yesterday's giving and the blood pours forth in a stream. It runs quickly, and the rhythm of the song is at a very fast tempo. There is much smiling among the men and an occasional "main-muk, main-muk (good, good)."

A third man pulls off an old scab from his arm and the blood pours forth in a larger stream than that of the others. The trumpet continues to blow (but not over the blood-giver since he is not one who is giving for the first time).

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Several men proudly exhibit their arms which show five and six cuts that have been made during previous ceremonies.

The man who gives his blood for the first time is considered to be in a dangerous position. This is one of the reasons, the old men say, why he is played over. "That man who gives his blood for the first time for Yurlunggur might get killed. That is why we play over him. That blood comes straight from his heart to his arm when it runs out. That is why we tie it at the top or it might all run out. The boy might get killed because his soul is in his heart and the blood comes from there for corroborees." "It is blood [man-gu] which makes people strong all their lives; if a man's blood runs out and he is emptied of all his blood that man dies and his soul is gone. We got this body because we have that blood. If that blood goes away we are empty inside."

It is believed that this blood, when it is on a man's body as a part of his decoration for the ceremony, if touched by a woman will make her ill or produce sores on her body, because it has had a totemic name given it and the essence of the totemic spirit has gone inside this blood. The blood of a man who has been hurt in an ordinary accident will not hurt a woman. She can rub against him and be all right. "The blood that hurts a woman is the spirit of the Wongar that is inside that blood. It has a big [sacred] name that the leader sang when the men cut their arms. The spirit that is inside that blood is not just that wooden trumpet but another one more inside [more sacred] and the totemic spirit itself, Yurlunggur.—That blood that man gives in the Djungguan is Wongar Derpal. [Derpal means magically powerful and strong.] That blood the old man gives to the dance people makes them derpal and it makes their feathers and bush cotton derpal. The meaning is like this: suppose you and I have come a long way and we reach a good camp and our people have one house empty and it is a good place for us and they take us and put us in it. We get in that house and have a good sleep and no one can hurt us because we have friends. That blood is just like that. It makes us feel easy and comfortable and it makes us strong. It makes us good. That derpal is like the head man. We have that derpal from that blood. It is in our body. It goes inside when we put that blood on it. That blood makes a very big thing."

The night of the day following the bloodletting, the procedure in the main camp is changed. The old women start the evening's per-

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their shoulders, the women carrying bunches of leaves in each hand have been dancing around the grass where the boys are to be cut.

3. When the men appear in camp with the boys there is a short period of considerable excitement and seeming confusion. The men continue crying out and march to the camp dance ground where the grass and leaves are and where the warngaitja was placed. By this time the grass has become dry, and if it has been disturbed more grass has been added. It has been placed there so that no blood from the circumcision operation can fall on the ground, for it is believed that the child operated on would become ill if this happened. After the circumcision the blood-stained grass is buried or burned. Before the circumcision and while preparing the boys, the crowd divides into two halves which call out like wild geese (this is also a part of the Narra totemic ceremony), while the leader cries out the common names of the totemic emblems:

"Gun-bor! gun-bor! (no meaning)
Main-yir-pa (goose)
Gun-bor gun-bor
Dur-a-mul (fresh water from the clan well)
Gur-um-gur-um-bo (goose)
Birn-gi (holes left in the mud where the geese had been feeding in a swamp country)"

4. The men form a compact group with the little boys in the center. The women stand slightly at the side. Most of the latter are crying. They say they are sorry because those little boys are going to be hurt. When the cutting is actually taking place they say, "You boys are fish, you are kangaroo, you are turtle [or any other game animal], and all of you things go into this little boy's blood, and all of the blood must go down to his penis, so that it will be like cutting a turtle head or cutting a kangaroo's head off, and it won't hurt the boys." This is cried out loud, and the old men say that it helps the little boys to bear the pain. Sometimes the women carry bushes and whip themselves with them to bring all the pain from the boy to themselves. It is only the close relatives and members of the boys' own clans who cry for them or attempt to hurt themselves for the boys' sake.

5. Two men lie down on their backs. Each boy is given a shell of water and the contents are drunk so that his mouth will be wet when he is bidden to hold his basket between his teeth. It is the last drink

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that he will be allowed to have for twenty-four hours. The basket is placed in the boy's mouth to prevent him from crying and to help him bear the pain.

The initiates do cry in spite of the basket. When they do, the men call out with a high trill which is supposed to be a snake's voice. The little boys beg to be turned loose. They are laid on top of the supine men and then held firmly so that they cannot move. The men's chorus surrounds the scene of the operation and it is impossible for the women to view this part of the ceremony. Some of the women dance around the men. One man cuts one boy, while at the same time a second individual circumcises the other. A neat operation is performed, and it is seldom that an infection sets in.

After each boy is cut, a man picks him up and runs with him back to the men's ground. After the man has washed his hands thoroughly with water, he warms them over a lighted fire stick. The wound is also washed and warmed by the man's hand.

The foreskin is put in a paper-bark basket filled with water. Later it is taken out and wrapped with paper bark and a pandanus string. It is hung on a basket as one of its pendants. It is supposed to be kept by the father until the boy grows up, when it is given to him. It is improbable that the boy ever receives the basket, but ideally this is the proper method of finally disposing of the foreskin.

6. Just after the circumcision is completed the leader approaches each man who has participated in the Djungguan ceremony and pulls a feather off the latter's body as a sign that the ceremony is over. This also has a magical significance: it is supposed to prevent any illness or other bad luck from coming to each participant because of his part in the "powerful" Djungguan ceremony. (The same idea exists in the leaders' rubbing the back of the dancer in the Gunabibi ceremony.)

7. Until this period in the boy's life and during the ceremony until the actual circumcision, the boy is allowed to eat any food that he may obtain, but after this he is not allowed to eat any large game until the rainy season has "made the grass come again." He is not allowed to drink water until the following day; he is told a great flood has covered the earth and made the water salty, the sea has covered the land and there is no fresh water to drink.

Native Interpretation.—When a child is circumcised the snake and the flood are supposed to have come again. Here is a typical statement

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852 yor-o), honey (Bar-a-gar-la), and honeybee hive (Warl-kin-di). While
535 the leader sings, the chorus shrilly cries, "Ai—ai!" Two birds who frequent the salt plains (Ta-bu-ta-bu) dance in while the chorus sings the name of these birds. The leader taps them with his singing sticks and makes them go over and sit down in the line formed by the chorus. The following dancers appear and are treated in the same way by the leader: honeybee, tiger snake (darpa), leech (djal-ng-nin), and two dogs. The hat worn by one of the dogs is knocked off.

The whole chorus then dance Dua honeybee. After this they tie bunches of leaves to their ankles and, beginning with the flying fox, the entire sequence of dances is performed again.

[773] *Native Interpretation.*—"That line of men come in with blood and feathers on them. They are snakes and they dance around the camp of the two Wawilak women."

852 F. The Circumcision and Steaming Rites

●304 1. The same dances are used for the steaming ceremony of the
783 Marndiella as in the Djungguan.

1. The boy is then circumcised. The same procedure and method of cutting are followed here as in the Djungguan (Section H), and the purificatory fire rite is performed in exactly the same manner.

Native Interpretation.—The same set of symbolical ideas operates here as in the Djungguan.

ooo The next chapter turns to a consideration of the Djunkgao myth and ritual cycle, and the reader may turn immediately to the interpretative chapter if he is interested in discovering the Murngin symbolic processes.

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121 V. Application of the Douglass tree-ring method.[2] This was attempted
127 unsuccessfully in an effort to date more exactly Malay intrusion into North Australia by examining the growth rings of the tamarind trees which were brought to the shores of the Arafura and the Gulf of Carpentaria by the Malay traders.

OBSERVATION OF CERTAIN HISTORICAL PROCESSES

177 The Gunabibi is not found in any of the clans around Arnhem and Buckingham Bays or among the island peoples of the northeast; but large
852 numbers of the men from these districts go south to the clans that have this ceremony and participate there. Certain features of the Gunabibi are not observed by these northern visitors, particularly the exchange of wives since they do not bring their wives with them. The Gunabibi is thought of as a southern and western ceremony. Leaders from the Rainbarngo come to the Goyder River country to assist in its direction. The Liaalaomir and surrounding clans, however, have it as an organized part of their ceremonial life. The process of diffusion, as it is observable in this case, has two elements in it: (1) the clans on the edges of its distribution tend to assimilate it, and (2) the clans farther away tend to accept it in that their men go to its celebrations, which means that a large group of men are Gunabibi initiates in areas where it is not a part of the total clan behavior. Because of its distribution among the more remote northern clans and simultaneous contacts with the general distribution of the Gunabibi, this rite is diffusing very rapidly and promises to cover the whole of the Murngin area within the next few years.

The rapidity of its diffusion is aided by the operation of a cultural selective factor: the ceremony itself is but a slight variation of the Djungguan and is dependent on the same Wawilak myth for its logic. It also emphasizes with greater clarity and satisfaction the ideas of fertility latent or explicit in all the large Murngin rituals; this would tend to make it attractive and exciting to their thinking and emotions and make them see it as "more inside" (that is, the further inside the men's ceremonial grounds one goes, the more sacred the mysteries become).

177 In the Roper River area the Gunabibi is associated with subincision but
852 in the northern Murngin area it is not. Subincision is diffusing into this
852 area as a part of the general complex, but is not a ritual element; and it is
●304 treated by the people who accept it as a separate custom, although they know that it is a part of the general Gunabibi configuration in the south. It seems probable that, in no great length of time, the two will be reassociated because the subincision songs are sung at the present time in the

[2] Douglass, Andrew E., "Dating Our Prehistoric Ruins; How Growth Rings in Timbers Aid in Establishing the Relative Ages of the Ruined Pueblos of the Southwest," *Natural History*, 1921, Vol. XVI, pages 27-30.

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Gunabibi sequences and many of the men and the leaders who sing them are at present subincised.[3]

The ceremonial life of the Murngin seems to be constantly enriched by cultural waves coming from the south—that is, from Central Australia—as will be demonstrated when we examine their burial customs from an historical point of view. The technological borrowings, of recent times at least, are from the seacoast and not from the inland. We must turn to the Malay contacts to see what traits have been taken and by what cultural processes they have been chosen from the contact of the Malay traders from the north and west.

Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of Northeastern Arnhem Land

The Malays, from an early date, made yearly voyages down through the East Indian Islands and through the Arafura Sea to the northern coast of Australia. Their prows sailed into many harbors and river mouths that indent the coast, from the Victoria River, which flows into the Indian Ocean in West Australia, to the southern limits of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the east.

Sir Matthew Flinders, in the second volume of his *Voyage to Terra Australis*, reports having seen first evidences of the Malays in the Pellew Islands.[4] He next speaks of them when he was anchored at Caledon

[3] The people to the south and west of the Murngin practice subincision. It seems to have a distribution that projects up the Goyder River to the Crocodile Islands. The following people practice it; Rainbarngo, the people around Cape Stewart, the Djinba, Ritarngo, the Marunga Island people (some do, some do not—it is a matter of personal choice), and the Burera (a matter of personal choice). None of the people east of them go through this ordeal except a few who have made long visits to the people west and south of them and have gone through the Gunabibi ceremony. In the more northern parts of the subincision distribution the cutting is unritualized. Two men go out and stand in a river or pool to above their waists. One takes a sharp stone knife and splits the urethra of the other; either at the same time or later, the one who has been cut reciprocates by performing the same operation on his friend. Farther south, subincision is a definite part of the Gunabibi ceremony. Clitoridectomy also seems to be practiced in this ceremony by these southern peoples. It seems likely that if other factors do not disturb the culture, the subincision element of the Gunabibi will spread into northeastern Arnhem Land and become a part of the ritual within this area. Many of the people at the present day sing a subincision song as part of the ceremony even though they do not go through the ordeal.

[4] Page 172—"Pellew Group: December, 1802: Indications of some foreign people having visited this group were almost as numerous, and as widely extended as those left by the natives. Besides pieces of earthen jars and trees cut with axes, we found remnants of bamboo lattice work, palm leaves sewed with cotton thread into the form of such hats as are worn by the Chinese, and the remains of blue cotton trousers, of the fashion called moormans. A wooden anchor of one fluke, and three boats' rudders of violet wood were also found; but what puzzled me most was a collection of stones piled together in a line, resembling a low wall, with short lines running perpendicularly at the back, dividing the space behind into compartments. In each of these

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252 This type of earth oven is made only for cooking larger animals. Fish, except minnows, are cooked on the open fire; minnows are carefully wrapped in paper bark and placed in the ash of a camp fire for cooking. A camp fire ordinarily used for cooking purposes is always made on a layer of earth taken from the nest of an ant bed. This earth is a kind of clay and holds its warmth longer.

Sometimes ground-fires for cooking are made by heaping a pile of stones in a hollowed-out spot and building a fire on them. After the stones are hot, paper bark and leaves are placed on them, the chunks of meat put in with bark and leaves over them, and the whole covered with sand and allowed to steam.

373 Pandanus palms are lighted to make a beacon for parties of canoes traveling at night in friendly country. They are also fired for certain totemic ceremonies.

322 To straighten a spear shaft, it is heated until the outside is smoked, then the maker holds the part of the shaft that is to be straightened between his two hands, places it against his knee, foot, or in his mouth, and pulls upon it. This process is repeated until, sighting along the shaft, it is seen to be straight.

304 Scarifications are made by pressing burning brands against the skin until the inner skin is burned through and a large welt formed. Ash is put inside the burn.[4]

412 *Stone Axe.*—All axes are of the ground-stone variety in this district, as they are everywhere throughout Australia except in the southwest.

They are made usually from smooth river stones. They normally weigh two and a quarter to three pounds, and vary from three to five inches in length, from two and one-half to four and one-half inches in width, and about one-half to one and a half inches in thickness at the larger end. The [324] axes are convex on both sides. The hafted end is usually slightly flaked to make a rough surface.

The stone blade is hafted to a wooden handle in the following manner: a small pliable stick is flattened on one side and bent in the middle so that the two ends meet. The axe head at the hafting end has been covered with beeswax. The stick is bent over the head and wrapped tightly with fiber string near the stone blade to hold it in place. Sometimes a pandanus circlet is plaited about the hafting instead of cord being used.

[324] The stone is ground to a sharp edge. The surface sometimes is ground only along the edge, but usually grinding extends to the border of the portion covered by the beeswax.

The handle is from ten to sixteen inches in length, but the norm is thirteen inches.

177 The Malays brought the steel axe for trading purposes and the white man has continued this process, so that the stone axe is seldom made today.

[4] Scarification is also produced by cutting.

I: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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string; at other times it is only painted with totemic designs. The wrapped types are also painted. Opossum string fringe is sometimes added to the wrapping.

Usually this type represents a mythical fish, but sometimes (in the west) a woman.

Measurements:

(a) Length: two feet.
Width: two and one-quarter inches.
Prong length: five inches.

(b) Length: three feet.
Width: three inches.
Prong length: ten inches.

(c) Length: five feet.
Width: three inches.
Prong length: sixteen inches.

(4) Plain Cylindrical Ranga

One variety of cylindrical ranga usually has at its two ends three or four carved flattened panels. The carving extends about six inches from each end. Ordinarily the pole is wrapped in feathered string and painted with geometrical designs indicating the species the emblem symbolizes. Such things as fire, iguana's tail, and woman are represented. When the last is formed, two wooden knobs are carved about eight inches from the top to represent the woman's breasts; at a distance of a foot from the bottom a one-and-one-half-inch hole is incised and lined with human hair and an inner layer of parrot feathers to represent the pubic hair and vagina; and a fringe of human hair is placed on the top of the pole. An incision running around the circumference of the pole is made below the knobs forming the breasts. It indicates the cicatrice cut or burned in the native women's chests below their breasts.

[304]

All of the cylinder may or may not have streamers of red parrot feathers hanging from the wrapped fiber string. Sometimes human hair string is used instead of the fiber string.

Measurements:

Length: two feet four inches.
Width: two to seven inches.

A second variety of cylinder has one sharp prong extending from each end for a distance of about one-third the length of the object. The total length of this variety of ranga varies from two to four and one-half feet. The body part is entirely or partly wrapped with feathered fiber string and painted.

Type III. Stone Ranga.—Two varieties of stone ranga are found among these people, the first a pointed type and the second a flat oblong form. The former is usually a river-bed stone of the form and shape of an upper

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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our own women so we can do as we please. We won't have any fooling with our mothers-in-law. No man likes to copulate with an old woman." They all went back and stayed in their own country.

Bamapama Garma Ceremony from Marunga Island

The significant idea in the following ceremony is that the man belongs to the Dua moiety and the woman is also a member of that division of the tribe. This garma is used for the same occasions as the others. The song sequence starts with (1) salt water, and the significance of singing the water of the ocean is that it is supposed to be carrying the coffin or hollow log into the native camp which has the deeper symbolism that the soul is being taken to the totem well. At the end of each song the name of the big well is called out and the chorus sings out "Yai!" The second song is the sea. Then follow: (3) small porpoise; (4) Marunga well country; (5) Marunga well country; (6) Marunga well country. All the above songs are sung while the men are transporting a large phallic emblem from the men's camp, where this garma totem is made, to the place within the general camp where the dance is held. The phallic emblem is painted with red ocher and colored generally as other totemic emblems are. The carving is done to show that the penis has been circumcised and also subincised.[3] The crowd of men dancers walk along with the phallic emblem. Frequently the hollow log coffin is also carried; sometimes this is designed for the final disposal of the bones of one of their members, or it may be merely a ritualistic observance.

The next dance is (7) porpoise; (8) man making a fish spear, is usually performed as a solo dance with the chorus joining in; (9) the spear is carried by Mar-ler-wer-ang-o, who is the Bamapama or trickster of the Marunga people and is looked upon as a man with a large penis which is symbolical of his lechery. The solo dancer who takes the part of Bamapama dances Bamapana with his spear watching the tide coming in. His spear is the phallic emblem. He is supposed to be extremely happy, and while he dances he calls out "Ha—ha—ha—ha," as he laughs to himself. He holds the phallic emblem up straight against his groin. He pretends to sneak up on a fish, spears and kills it, and breaks its head with his foot. The singer and dancer then take up the story of Bamapama when he sees two women come along the seashore just at sundown. They are supposed to be hunting little sea birds along the jungle edge on Marunga Island.

Marlerwerango or Bamapama sees them. He leaves the fishing and sneaks up on them. A man dances the part of the two women. The phallic emblem of Bamapama is thrust between the legs of the man as he stoops

[3] The Marunga people, in company with certain of the Goyder River people, practice subincision, although the subincision is not a ritual. The cutting is usually done by two young men who operate on each other.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

hut to punish the women. When the women saw the enraged serpent approaching, they sang many magical songs[51] and danced many powerful dances, to send the serpent back to his waterhole, but he still came on. In desperation, the women went inside and blocked the openings of their hut with bark and leaves to keep *jurlungur* at bay. But the serpent pushed his head inside, swallowed the child, then the younger and finally the elder sister. He then returned to the waterhole, but later came again to the surface and regurgitated the women and child, whose bodies are now large rocks.

On Pl. 88A, the rectangle at the top represents the bark hut built by the women. Within are the two *Wawalik* sisters and the newly-born child. *Jurlungur*, at the bottom, *a*, is leaving his sacred well. In the next position the serpent has encircled the hut, thrust his head inside and swallowed the child. On the lower right, he is returning to the sacred well of Mirrirmina after having swallowed the whole family.

The designs on either side of *jurlungur* at *a* represent the water in the sacred Mirrirmina well. The central parallel lines, with the footmarks between them, indicate the path of the women leading to the hut. The design to the left of the path symbolizes the blood which offended *jurlungur*, and that to the left, dry ground. The designs on the right-hand edge of the painting again represent the water in the sacred well of Mirrirmina.

Banaitja and his Son, or Counterpart, Laitjun, at Blue Mud Bay

Banaitja[52] and his son, or counterpart, *Laitjun*, are to the *jiritja* moiety of eastern Arnhem Land what *Djunkgao*, his sister *Madalait* and the *Wawalik* sisters are to the *dua*. Neither the mythology nor the ceremonies of *Banaitja* and *Laitjun* are as varied or as extensive as those of the *dua* ancestors.

Banaitja came from the south-west[53] to Blue Mud Bay during the time that ordinary men and women lived in the world. He was a huge man, with deep chest and long powerful limbs, who always carried a long spear, called *balinin*, and a spear-thrower, on one end of which was a tassel of human hair.[54] As he walked around the countryside he shouted 'Wah-wah' in a voice so loud that

51. One of the songs which the sisters sang is still used by the women in the *almark* ceremonies when they hear the sound of the log gong. This sound is supposed to be the voice of the serpent (Warner, 1937, p. 311).

52. In some of the myths *Banaitja* recreated himself in the name of *Laitjun*, in another he is the father of *Laitjun*, and in still another he travelled as *Banaitja* through a number of localities, including Cape Arnhem. The fact, however, that Warner (1937), p. 364, in his description of the *jiritja warra* ceremonies of Milingimbi refers only casually to *Banaitja*, and makes no reference whatever to *Laitjun*, suggests both that the *Banaitja* myth is unimportant in the Milingimbi area, and that the creation of *Laitjun* is only a local development in the Blue Mud Bay area.

53. The carved figure of *Banaitja*, Pl. 135A, B, shows him to be sub-incised. As sub-incision is not practised in Arnhem Land, this would suggest that the *Banaitja* myth extends south into the area of sub-incision.

54. A similar spear-thrower was used by the members of the *wirinikapara* moiety (equivalent to the *jiritja*) during the ceremonial bathing of the *arawaltja* rituals at Goose Sylandt, p. 56.

THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

(b) DEATH AND BURIAL

There are three important events in the life of every male aboriginal of Arnhem Land—in fact, in the life of any tribalized Australian aboriginal birth, when he leaves the land of the spirits and enters the every-day world; initiation, when he is admitted into the sacred or ritualistic world, where age makes him increasingly important; and death, when he leaves the every-day world, and again enters into the land of the spirits.

Although there are few rituals associated with birth, those of initiation and the later age-grading ceremonies are long and complicated, for it is by these ceremonies that men are admitted deeper and deeper into the secret life of the tribe.

At death, the burial rituals extend over many weeks, their purpose being not only to send the spirit so happily to its future home that it will not be a danger to the living, but also to allow the living to adjust themselves to their loss.

The burial ceremonies at Yirrkalla have three main phases: (i) the ceremonies at death, (ii) the cleansing of the bones, and (iii) the final burial, after which the spirit of the dead leaves for its aboriginal 'heaven'. If the dead are of the *dua* moiety, the spirit goes to Purelko, and if of the *jiritja*, to Nalkuma.

(i) *The Ceremonies at Death*

When a man dies his relatives gather round the dead body, wailing loudly, the women cutting their scalps with sharpened bones until the blood flows freely. After a short period of wailing the men form a group apart from the women and chant the long series of songs which belong to the totemic group of their dead companion. Next morning the men proceed with the rites of burial, first by rubbing red ochre over the body of the corpse, and on that painting his totemic design.[13] The men also make two bark effigies[14] which they put under the arms of the corpse. They explain to him that the effigies are his children, whom they have killed and placed beside him to prevent him being lonely and wishing to return to haunt the living. The corpse is then wrapped in a thick layer of paper-bark and tied with string.

While all this is being done, other men are erecting a platform of logs about five feet in height and covering it with a layer of leaves. Then, while the men chant another series of totemic songs belonging to the dead man, two aborigines

13. This totemic design is the same as that painted on his body during circumcision. See body paintings associated with circumcision, Pl. 128. Warner (1937), pp. 415-16, in his description and interpretation of the mortuary rituals of the Murngin, an adjacent people, records that the totemic design is painted on the body of the dead man so that the spirits, or *Mokoi*, can identify him.

14. Similar to the bark figures, Fig. 65C, D. Frazer (1936), p. 59, records: 'In Tahiti . . . the priest took a number of small slips of plantain leaf-stalk, fixed two or three pieces under each arm of the corpse, placed a few on the breast, and then, addressing the corpse, said, "There are your family, there is your child, there is your wife, there is your father, and there is your mother. Be satisfied yonder (that is, in the world of the spirits). Look not toward those who are left in this world."'

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

Three of the message sticks from Yirrkalla were unidentified, Fig. 68C, D, Fig. 66A, B, and Fig. 67A, F. They are included to indicate additional designs employed on the message sticks of that locality. 211 532*

(b) CEREMONIAL MESSAGE STICKS

The Man, Buma-buma, of Trial Bay

At Wialpa, Trial Bay,[50] during mythical times, an old *dua* man, *Bouka-baluwuru*, instructed his son, *Buma-buma*, to go to an adjacent group of aborigines and bring back with him two boys who were due to be circumcised. When *Buma-buma* reached the distant camp he demanded, in the name of his father, two girls instead of two boys. Though the old men agreed to the demand, they were somewhat suspicious of the unusual request. On nearing Wialpa, *Buma-buma*, hiding the girls in the jungle, told his father that the old men of the distant people wanted at least another year before their youths were ready for circumcision. The father, who did not believe that story, demanded more and further more details, until *Buma-buma* was forced to admit he had brought girls instead of boys. The men, and especially the father, were so enraged over *Buma-buma's* disobedience and its consequent disgrace that they speared the young man to death. After the burial rituals of *Buma-buma*, the men at Wialpa were so ashamed of his actions that they changed themselves into water-birds, which still live in the nearby fresh-water swamps. 211 532* 773*

At the present time the ceremonial message stick, on which the figure of *Buma-buma* is engraved, is sent to a group of aborigines who have a boy ready for circumcision.[51] Although the designs on the stick refer specifically to the death and burial of *Buma-buma*, and not to circumcision, the myth of *Buma-buma's* disobedience and punishment is so well known that the significance of the message stick is understood. [202] [304]

Figure 65E is the obverse side and Fig. 65F the reverse. On Fig. 65E the dead body of *Buma-buma*, wrapped for burial, occupies the central position. The spears, which had been thrust into his side, are at *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. The group of lines, *e*, are *dua* men and *f*, *jiritja* men, who are taking part in the burial rituals. The short lines, *g*, at the top of the message stick are the *jiritja* and *h*, at the bottom, the *dua* men, who are chanting the songs of burial. All these men have since been changed into water-birds. The designs on panel *j* refer to the paper-bark wrapping of the corpse.

The reverse side, Fig. 65F, shows *Buma-buma* when the decomposition is complete and the people have assembled to transfer his bones to the temporary bark coffin. The main lozenge-shaped design is the paper-bark wrapping round the corpse, which is now a skeleton. On the left at *a* is a *dua* man, *Biribirit*, with a bark coffin at his feet, and at *b* a *jiritja* man, also standing on a bark

50. Map, Fig. 57.

51. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the boys are circumcised when they are about eight years of age. [852]

[text continues on p. 473]

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

primitive races. After the age of six or seven years the children very largely pass out of the direct care of their actual parents, and become part of the tribal group. Quite frequently they will spend weeks and months away with other members of the horde, but no concern is felt on their behalf. They are the children of the clan rather than of their actual parents.

At about the age of nine or ten the boys are taken away from the care of the women and the companionship of the younger children, and are prepared by the men for their initiation into the real life of the tribe. The chief feature of initiation in this area is the rite of circumcision, which is universally practised in East Arnhem Land. This actual ceremony is followed by a period of instruction, during which the boys are acquainted with their "marlk," or sub-section, their "jungoin," or totem, and the various laws and tabus designed to regulate their lives as members of the tribe.

There is in this area no initiation ceremony for girls, who, for the main part, accompany the women in their search for food, and generally become acquainted with the duties which they will be required to perform in later life.

In this district the children have nothing in the way of organised games, and for the main part find their amusement in the imitation of the doings of their elders. The boys arm themselves with the strong stalks of the long tropical grasses, and, taking sides, engage in strenuous spear fights. The girls play at cooking, the building of little humpies, and the nursing of babies represented by small bundles of paper bark. Both sexes join in elaborate mourning ceremonies over a dead bird or young animal, breaking off their wailing to indulge in hearty bursts of laughter. Life for them, during their early years, is happy, care-free, and undisciplined.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR A. P. ELKIN

Baldwin Spencer in his *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, 1914 (Chapter IX, and pp. 217–8) recorded myths which ascribed important creative and formative activities to culture-heroines, in particular to Imberombera and Ungulla Robunbun in western Arnhem Land, and ceremonial activity together with original possession of the bullroarer, to Kunapipi women in the Roper River region. All alike left spirit-children at places along the routes of their journeyings, and the first two were responsible for the tribal and linguistic divisions in their region, having "sent forth" spirit-children to found the tribes.*

In 1937, Professor W. L. Warner's important book, *A Black Civilization*, was published, giving the results of his field work in 1926–29 at Millingimbi (Crocodile Islands) and the neighbouring region of north-east Arnhem Land. Half of it is a study of mythology and ritual. Two of the most important figures are the Wawilak sisters, who named the animals and plants as they travelled from inland to the north along the Goyder River, and who, in an endeavour to ward off the great ancestral python, Yurlunggur, and to end the wet season, sang and danced the songs of four great rituals, one of which was the Gunabibi (Kunapipi). The Yurlunggur swallowed the two women and their babies, causing their deaths, but their spirits lived on and revealed the rituals to two Dreamtime men, so that the important past should not be forgotten. This included the introduction of circumcision which the Wawalik had intended to perform on their sons (Warner, pp. 250–9). In the Gunabibi ritual, the Gunabibi is the bullroarer, and also symbolizes Yurlunggur who swallowed and regurgitated the two women and their sons (pp. 293–4). Another important ritual myth is about two Djunkgao sisters who came into the region from the south-east, naming natural species

* Compare too the similar myth of the "big woman", Warahmoorungee, of the Iwaidja tribe, in this region, as given by Inspector Foelsche, "Notes on the Aborigines of North Australia", *Journal, Royal Society of South Australia, Vol. V*, p. 17. This is the "Mother", "Waramurunggoindju", who, Mr. Berndt was informed by the Maung at Goulburn Island, came from the Macassan Islands, and eventually by way of Timor and Bathurst Island to Cape Don, the Iwaidja and other tribal territories, and finally to east Arnhem Land. R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section 3, to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

184 the Mother (or Mothers), represented quite often by Two Sisters
773 even in central-western Northern Territory, is the creative Being;
776 so from this point of view the Wauwalak cycle, now substantiating
794 the introduced Kunapipi, should possess Two Sisters who are themselves creative Beings. Local belief however accords this status only to the Djanggawul; but since the Wauwalak are their daughters, the original doctrine is not greatly inconvenienced. The creative Mothers may still be the Djanggawul, making their appearance through the Wauwalak Sisters, while the Wauwalak themselves are the Mungamunga of the south.

773 The actual meaning of the name Kunapipi is not easy to discover.
794 The cult itself, with its relevant ceremonies, and the myth that substantiates the ritual, is Kunapipi, and this, in most areas mentioned
796 above, is translated as the "Mother", or "Old Woman". The term "old" in this context signifies status and age, although not elderly appearance. Dr. Warner[7] notes that Kunapipi (spelt "Gunabibi") is
[114] one name of the Pythons which swallowed the Wauwalak; but, as mentioned above, this writer stresses the importance of the Snakes at the expense of the Fertility Mothers, and this element is by far the most apparent in north-eastern Arnhem Land religion.

192 At Yirrkalla, the name Kunapipi is said to have two meanings.
304 First, the word Kunapipi means "whistle-cock" (that is, a sub-
83 incisure); for these ceremonies came up from the Rose and the
[171] Roper Rivers where subincision is general, whereas throughout the greater part of north-eastern Arnhem Land only circumcision is practised. The ceremonies of Kunapipi in the Yirrkalla region may also be termed *wiri:l* or *wira'i*, meaning "incisure". But Kunapipi means also the uterus of the Mother. That is, the incised penis symbolizes the snake (Python or Rainbow Snake), and the incisure itself the uterus. Symbolically, then, the subincised male member represents both the female and the male organs, essential in the process of fructification.

More generally, however, the term Kunapipi is said to mean the Mother, and in isolated cases the Snake, both being accepted versions. It is because Kunapipi is translated as Fertility Mother, through the greater part of the Northern Territory, that we have preferred to use that appellation.

794 A number of ceremonies throughout the northern half of the
796 Northern Territory are associated with Fertility Mothers and Rain-
184 bow (or Great) Snakes; and it is possible that the majority of these cults are linked with one another, even if their outward expressions are dissimilar. This aspect requires intensive study, including the collection of mythological texts, and analysis of relevant ritual and songs. The Kunapipi cult, however, consists of certain distinctive elements, that are found throughout the areas we have mentioned.

7. L. Warner, *op. cit*, p. 294.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
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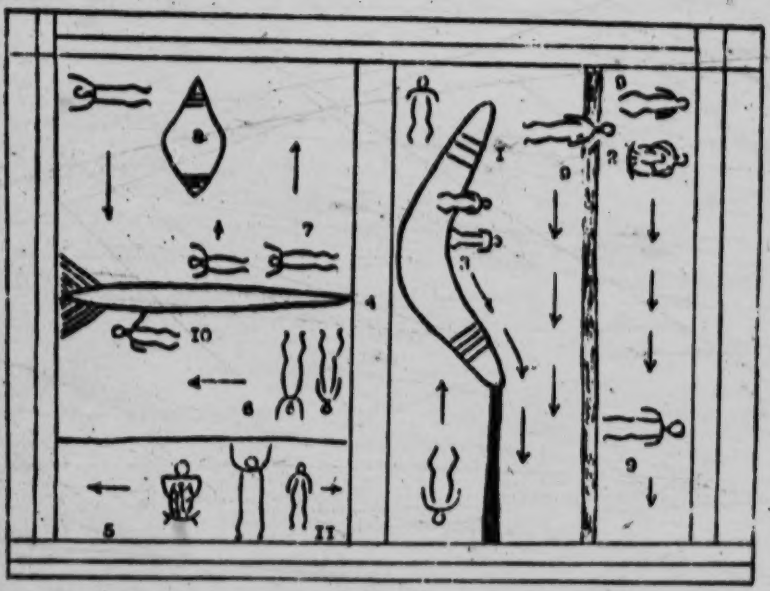
ground, is principally concerned with ceremonial intercourse, an integral part of the Kunapipi, taking place on the sacred ground. 532 796 881



Text Figure 5.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XVII.
Ceremonial intercourse on the sacred ground.

On the right hand side of this drawing is the *jilparindji* or *kalawal* boomerang (1); it occupies the place of the *kanala* in the drawing and is drawn in much the same way. (This particular aspect requires further attention, but cannot be elaborated here.) It is this boomerang (usually designed a little differently, with a groove at the centre) which is used in ritual defloration on the Kunapipi ground, before ceremonial coitus. That is to say, young girls have their hymens pierced prior to intercourse on the ceremonial ground; others, whose hymens have already been broken through normal premarital coitus, have the end of the boomerang placed symbolically in the vagina. In the Rose River region, this form of defloration is a counterpart of the subincision rite, and neither takes place in the north-eastern part of Arnhem Land. In the long *jiritja* Rose River Love Song cycle, known at Yirrkalla, defloration and ritual copula- 532 796 881 833 [304] [836] [171]

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
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and left deposits of red ochre[1] at Warnggawoi and Gulmanbi spring.

Before the Djanggawul left Nguruninana, two novices were circumcised, a *mara* and a *gurlwa*. These two boys[2] were sitting in a big shade undergoing the circumcisional rites. When cut in the camp they were called *gamajadi*, and then, on being taken out to their seclusion shade, they were called *galibingu*. This was the first time circumcision had been carried out in that region. Afterwards it became a general practice, because the Djanggawul had 'made it a big dreaming.'[3] But the Djanggawul Brother himself was never 'cut' or circumcised in this way: he only shortened his penis. He is said to have circumcised the young boys 'because he didn't want the youths' penes to grow long like his'. He made this law for the new generation only, 'a new law for new people.' And he spoke to them, saying, 'It doesn't matter for myself, but it must be a new law for all my new people, all those I have put in this country.'[4]

[1] This red ochre is called *murunggun*, from which the local linguistic group takes its name. The Djanggawul are said to have spoken here: 'We leave this red ochre, so that all the people may get it from us.' Red ochre is symbolic of the afterbirth blood shed by the Two Sisters, or is a 'condensation' of the sun's redness, as symbolized in the red chest feathers of the *lindaridj* parakeets. Today red ochre from Elcho Island is traded far inland, and all along the coast.

[2] Also termed *muralai* or *mulalai*. The old term used to describe this stage was *galibingu* or *galiugun*: the novices are called by this term, or *galaumuja* (referring to their penes), while undergoing the rites, and cannot use their real names. The real names of these two were, however, Nganangu and Bralbral, both of the *dua* moiety. The latter is said not to be the same as the Bralbral who accompanied the Djanggawul from Bralgu. These two novices went back and forth from the general camp to their sacred shade. (Among the north-eastern Arnhem Landers there is not the strict seclusion of circumcision novices found in most other parts of Australia.)

[3] In another version it is said that a son of the Djanggawul, a *murlgu* flying fox, was circumcised at Blue Mud Bay; his foreskin was kept and waxed into a feathered string pendant attached to a sacred dilly bag, as is the practice to-day. The reason given for the circumcision is that the Djanggawul Brother discovered that his children (those removed from the Two Sisters) were sleeping together, and indulging in incestuous relations with one another (as the Djanggawul themselves were in the habit of doing). At first he did not realize what they were doing, but one day he found them copulating together. Then he 'changed his mind' and cut (circumcised) the penes of the young boys (his sons), 'because they had slept with their sisters: that was their punishment'.

[4] Informants remark, 'He had been going on in the old way until that time, just like those people at Goulburn Islands, and the Gunwinggu, and others of western Arnhem Land. All those people haven't adopted the new law. If the Djanggawul Brother put it at those places, the people there have missed the law—but we, the north-eastern and north-central people, did not miss his law.'

Another version states that the Djanggawul started circumcision 'because he was pushed out by new people' (in the dreaming concept of *jiritia*, spring water).

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
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The Content of the Myth

dance, and in the *rangga* emblems and sacred baskets. The *rangga* poles, although modern in manufacture and decoration, are still the 'same' as those used by the Djanggawul, and contain the very spirit that possessed them in that mythological time: they retain the sacred aura of the Djanggawul.

There is no explanation in the myth for the elongated penis and clitorises of the Djanggawul,[1] except that this special feature makes them unique among Ancestral Beings and Spirits of this area. When they had been cut, the severed fragments were treated as *rangga*, or as feathered pendant strings. Some informants insist that the original *rangga* mentioned in the myth were actually the genitalia of the Djanggawul.

Another interesting point raised in the myth is that the Sisters, when having their clitorises cut by their Brother,[2] were treated as circumcisional novices. Immediately afterwards followed the circumcision ceremony at Elcho Island, said to be instituted by the Djanggawul Brother himself. To-day, however, no circumcision ceremony is associated with the *dua nara* rituals; this feature is relegated to the *djunggawon* and *mandiela*, sponsored by the Wauwalak mythology.[3] The *dua nara* is not age-grading as the myth suggests; but since these rituals appear to be more purely indigenous than, for example, the Wauwalak ceremonies, it is possible that they were originally designed for this purpose. In the course of time the initiatory elements have disappeared from the ritual, but remain in the myth; and to-day the ceremony is revelatory in function.

Some inconsistencies appear in the myth, but this is not unusual in mythology which has been handed down through the generations by word of mouth. It is something which must be considered: we must allow for differences in theme, for a variety of versions, and for a considerable range in interpretation. Mythology presented verbally in story or song, no matter how conventional the structure of the society, shows a certain amount of flexibility, since the only means of presenting, and thus of preserving it, must be the individual members of that society. The narrator of a story may stress some particular aspect, elaborating it perhaps to the detriment of others. This process, gradual as it is, has cumulative effects; when, as apparently here, it has been continuing for centuries, we may suppose that the myth, for example the Djanggawul, has altered considerably from its original form. This must be taken into account in our analysis of the myth, and in our interpretation of its meaning.

The fact that the Aborigines pay so much attention to tradition

[1] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Kunapipi*, Chapters I *c* and IV.

[2] The symbolic significance of these has been treated in the Song Cycle.

[3] *Vide* R. Berndt, *op. cit.*, Chapters I *c* and IV.

8: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1954
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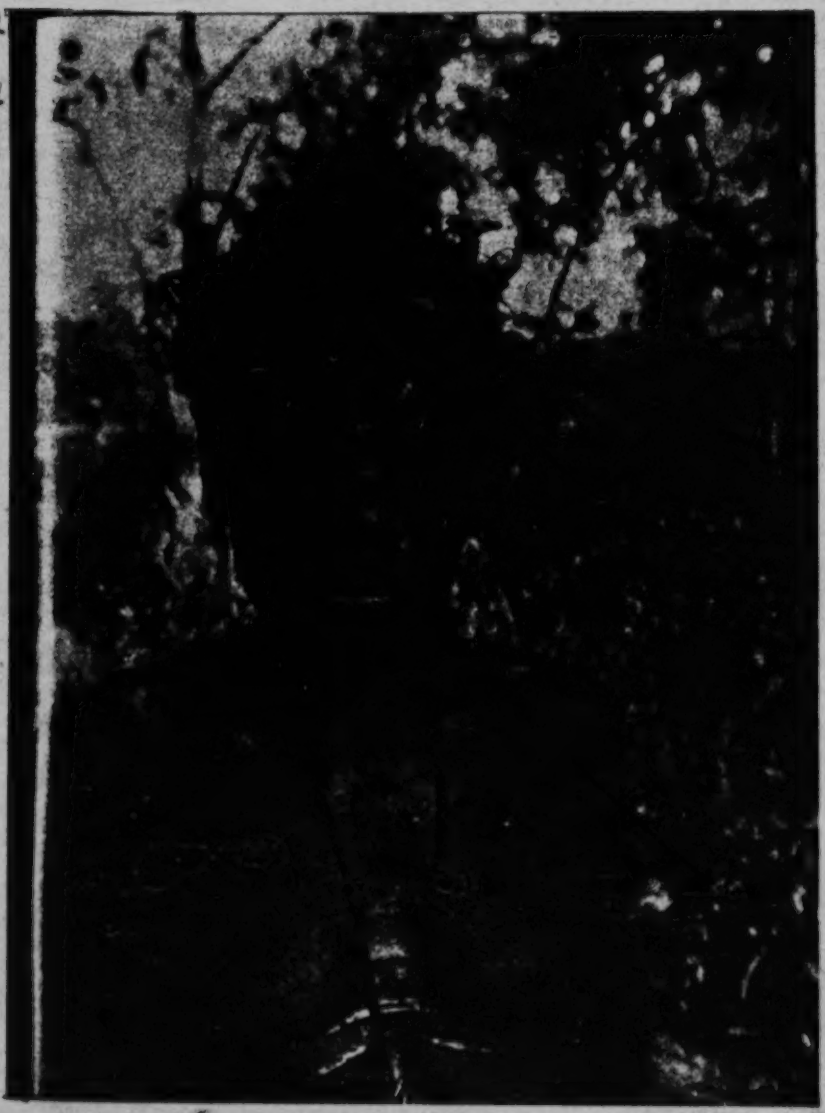

Plate 6: Mawandan at Yirrkalla.

[p. 25(c)]

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Plate 8a: Nabwidju at Yirrkalla; a wife of Djirin.

Plate 8b: Djirin at Yirrkalla; a son of Wonggu.

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[p. 25(E)]

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
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remembers of how it felt and what it meant to him as an individual; the text referred to presents the norms and modes of the society.

When I arrived in the Murngin country the men who had been on board the sailing vessel with me very quickly spread the news of my arrival among all the people. A number of the older men came to see me. Among them was a man who, I discovered, could speak a fair amount of English. He and I talked. I learned his country was on the mainland farther to the east; although he spoke English his thinking was native; and he considered himself, and was looked upon, as a person of consequence and authority among his people.

Across his chest and on his upper arms were ritual scars from self-inflicted wounds which had been filled with ashes. I judged him to be a man of about 45, possibly a bit older. He told me that his name was Mahkarolla. It was not long until we began our discussions, he telling me about his people and I telling him about mine. He became my best informant. We went out hunting together. We did together many of the things common to the daily life of a Murngin. He took me on my first canoe expedition away from Millingimbi Island to some of the other islands in the Crocodile group where a great ceremony was being held in honor of Bapa Indi, the python totem. It was during this first expedition that we became aware of our mutual dependence and friendship. Thereafter we were constantly together.

The next sections are told by him. I have translated his English, much of it pidgin, and his use of Murngin into standard English and have arranged what he told me in a simple chronology.

"When I Was a Little Boy"

I don't remember myself when I was very little. When I was a little larger I wanted to go to the countries of other clans and see places like Elcho Island and the Goyder River (map, page 40) and see how people lived and what they did and learn their language, but I was too little. All this was before I was circumcised.

I had heard my older brothers and some of the old men talk about Kopang and Macassar and the black men who lived to the west and who talked a language we little children could not understand (pages 453-458). I, too, wanted to go there and see those countries and ride on Macassar prahus which came to see us when the wind was from the East, but I was too little. Some of my brothers and some of the old men had been to those countries and a few of these men, while they were there, had Macassar women for wives. Charli Charli Sit-Down, my older brother, fell to the deck from the mast of a Macassar ship. He broke his back and still lived.

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
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159 852 869 men told me he was the great Father Python who had come in the spirit and was made true for us black men at this ceremony for him. They said when I grew older I could see him, but that now I was too little and that my eyes were not strong enough and that it took much "power" to look at him like old men must have when they see him.

159 852 After a little while I heard all the men calling out with some strange sounds. I knew later that they were using the cry of a wedge-tailed eagle. They were beating their spears with their spear-throwers. They came nearer and nearer and finally two of them picked us up and put our legs around their necks and over their shoulders. We rode on their backs as we marched to the main camp where the women were. When they carried me on their shoulders I thought they were sure to kill me. I was more afraid. I held my head down and shut my eyes. I thought first, "Maybe they will kill me," then I would think, "No, maybe they are going to burn me." I would think back and forth like that. When we got in the women's camp they took me down from off the man's shoulders and one man lay down on the ground and I was placed on top of him and some other men held me with my legs spread apart so that I could not move. I cried and cried. Just before they did this one old man gave me a drink of water. When I started crying one of the men put a small basket in my mouth for me to bite on and so the women couldn't hear my crying. All the men had surrounded me and I was in the middle of a circle. I could hear the women crying while they danced around our circle (pages 286-288).

[304] One man took a stone spear and broke it and took a small piece of it and cut the skin from off the head of my penis. Then I was picked up and a man ran with me back to the men's ground. I was crying and crying, for I was very afraid and the cutting had hurt me. When we got near the men's ground he put me down by a small fire and took some water and washed where I had been cut and took his hands and put them over the fire and heated them and placed them over my penis. This made me feel much better. I was thirsty. I asked for water. The old men said that while we had been out in that ground the whole world had been covered with salt water again because the tide had come in and covered everything. There was no drinking water now, he said. They told me this for one day and would not let me drink. All that day I went without water; next day they gave me some (pages 287-288).

159 783 852 A day or two after I had been cut some old men took me, with my father, to the men's ground. When we got there I found they had two logs laid down and two more laid across them. They were placed over some stones that were as hot as fire. A big fire had been built over these stones to make them hot, before the logs were placed on top of them. All the old men were

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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A TYPICAL YULENGOR OF ARNHEM LAND

A pleasant, popular youth 'credited' with six or seven tribal killings

[facing p22]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

bodies. This glue is obtained by cutting a vein in the arm, painting the blood on the skin and adding feathers before it congeals. Paint brushes are made from human hair or from twigs.

I remember watching Wonggu mix his colours in shells, flatten his bark, and prepare his orchid gum. Only then did he realize that he needed a brush, so he leaned over and cut a tuft of hair from his son's head, bound it to a twig and commenced his mural.

A well-known anthropologist stayed with us at Yirrkala and obtained a big selection of aboriginal arts and crafts and bark paintings. He paid the Yulengor well, and they gave full play to their ingenuity, manufacturing such things as bows and arrows which, incidentally, are not used by aborigines. I saw several paintings in the collection in the usual red, yellow, white, and black, together with an additional vivid blue. Not having seen blue before, I could not account for it till later in the day my wife chanced to remark that several of her blue-bags had disappeared.

Body decorations are made by mutilating the skin, and one pleasing mutilation resembles a string of beads on a woman's breast, where each bead is a raised nodule of flesh about the size of a pea. Women and girls sear a pattern on the skin with firesticks, and rub pipeclay into the wound; a more common practice is to cut the marks into the flesh before filling them with clay. For reasons of vanity and custom, a woman has a few cicatrices across her hips, and possibly on her shoulders, and in the event of sorrow she adds some to her midriff. If a brother should die, a sister paints horizontal lines across the backs of her legs below the knees, and when his bones are being collected she substitutes gashes for her clay markings.

It was explained that a man gets a friend to cut the customary perpendicular lines from his shoulder and halfway to his elbow, but he himself makes the more important

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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cicatrix across his chest. These raised shiny ridges stand out like cords, and once they have healed they seem to cause no inconvenience. Clay is rubbed into the wound so that it will heal slowly, and the mutilated flesh becomes a raised ridge. Men with sufficient vanity treat any accidental wound in this manner, and produce broad, irregular raised areas and cicatrices over their bodies. The Stone Age warrior is proud of his cicatrices and regards them as a form of beauty. Burramurra told me that they are a sign of manliness, and added: 'When women see a man with rows of long thick cicatrices across his chest they are attracted by the glamour.'

Arm-bands are woven from split cane and string and are adorned with opossum fur or birds' feathers; everyone seems to wear from one to a dozen of them. Cane armlets are the most common; they are tight fitting and are usually worn till they fall to pieces. Men's muscles swell round them; as children grow, armlets become so tight and painful that they chafe the skin and have to be cut away. Mothers and fathers decorate their children with armlets and string corselets, which are said to prevent illness and sores.

Vast quantities of string and rope resembling raffia are made from the inner bark of several trees. Varieties include string as fine as cotton, fishing-lines, rope for turtle and dugong harpoons, and two-inch cable for mooring canoes. In the making of string it is a common sight to see an old man squatting in the sand and pulling the hairs off the inside of his thigh and then picking out three fibres of bark and spreading them on his hairless thigh. With a hand on the fibres he rolls them toward him and finally with a quick thrust of the wrist he reverses the action and rolls them forward, uniting them into a single string. Fresh fibre is added as required, till in about an hour fifty or sixty feet of uniform string is completed. Harpoon and heavy ropes are

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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YULENGOR

828 Stone Age man believes that his emotions are seated in
827 his stomach, and his names for anger, fear, jealousy, and the rest, are descriptive of the changes that take place in the stomach in generating emotion. They make no distinction between anger, indignation, and jealousy; they are known as 'ngoi-mari-buna' ('ngoi' referring to underneath or the foundation), meaning the stomach boils.

[578] A man who refuses to support his relative in a quarrel is called 'ngoi kapumiri'; that is, he has a watery stomach (or as we should say in English 'no guts').

Pleasure, joy, and happiness are dependent on the stomach, which subsides into a peaceful calm on hearing welcome news. It was explained that when a man sees an enemy approaching, his stomach boils and his anger rises, but if the enemy says he has come to make peace, the man's anger disappears and his stomach subsides into a flat calm 'like the sea after a storm'; he has 'the wind taken out of his sails'.

Sorrow and regret also rise from the stomach. Fear comes from the same source, and rises and swells in the throat; Stone Age man also knows something about his 'heart in his mouth'.

[593] Love is dependent on the stomach, and the affection of a father for his son, or the devotion of mothers for their children, boils from the depths. I was reminded of the ageless biblical story of Joseph's meeting his treacherous half-brothers after many years; he was speechless, 'For his bowels did yearn for his (youngest) brother'.

152 It has often been suggested that aborigines have not the same highly developed affection for each other as white people, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Devotion is genuine, and intimate, and is openly expressed on scores of occasions which in a white community would call for little more than passing sympathy. The first initiation
304 in a boy's life reaches its climax in circumcision, when wide-
881 spread emotion is expressed. Women, girls, and children
[302]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

of the hordes sit apprehensively under shady trees whilst the men paint intricate totemic designs on the initiates. More often than not several hordes meet for the occasion, and all the boys between eight and ten years of age are prepared by relatives. Armlets, dilly-bags and trinkets are hung around their necks for decorative purposes, and sometimes they carry a knife or steel tomahawk. When their moment arrives, the boys are brought to the ceremonial ground, and the men dance and sing with increasing emotion, till at last they bunch together and with kindly reluctant movements force each boy into the arms of a crouching man who supports and holds him. Women relatives close in and dance around the tightly packed circle and wail in rising agitation, others gash their heads, and girl playmates of the initiates cry amongst the trees and cut their breasts with sharp shells. An invitation is often extended to a visiting Yulengor to perform the actual operation, which is frequently prolonged by the use of a stone knife or spearhead. The loud purposeful calls of the men seldom drown the cries of the victim. It is then that a wave of emotion sweeps over the entire camp.

When a nomad is sick the relatives will crouch tightly around him, and their excessively mournful sympathy is conducive to moans and vapours from the patient. Eye-rolling and groans will accompany even simple sprains and abdominal pains and inspire sympathetic cries and wails. At the approach of death, the next of kin draw near pathetically brushing flies from the patient, attempting to sustain warmth with sheets of paper-bark, but unwittingly stifling him in a turgid atmosphere. There are wails and shrieks if continuous movement is not seen from some part of the body. Commotion at death is indescribable; women deliberately hurl themselves on the ground with loud cries, and they wail loudly and tremulously as they stab their heads with sharp stones and shells.

Egyptians preserved mummified bodies in pyramids,

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HEAD CUTTING FOR SORROW OR JOY

Mothers 'rejoicing' for sons they had thought dead

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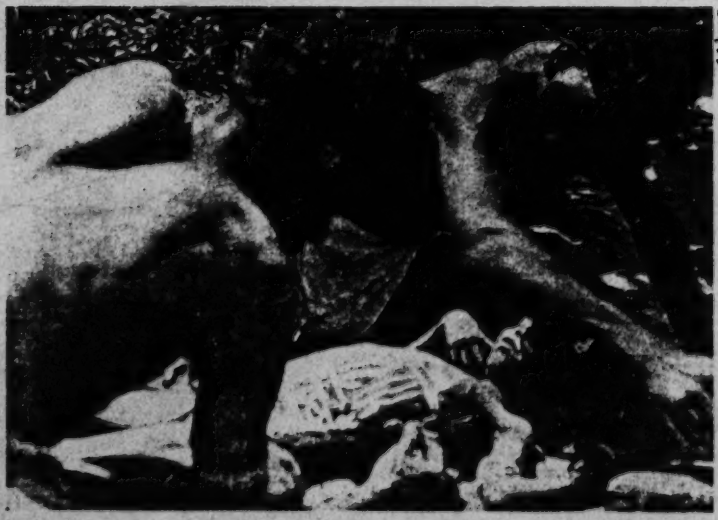

INITIATION CEREMONY

Painting a boy for his initiation-circumcision

[facing p 134]